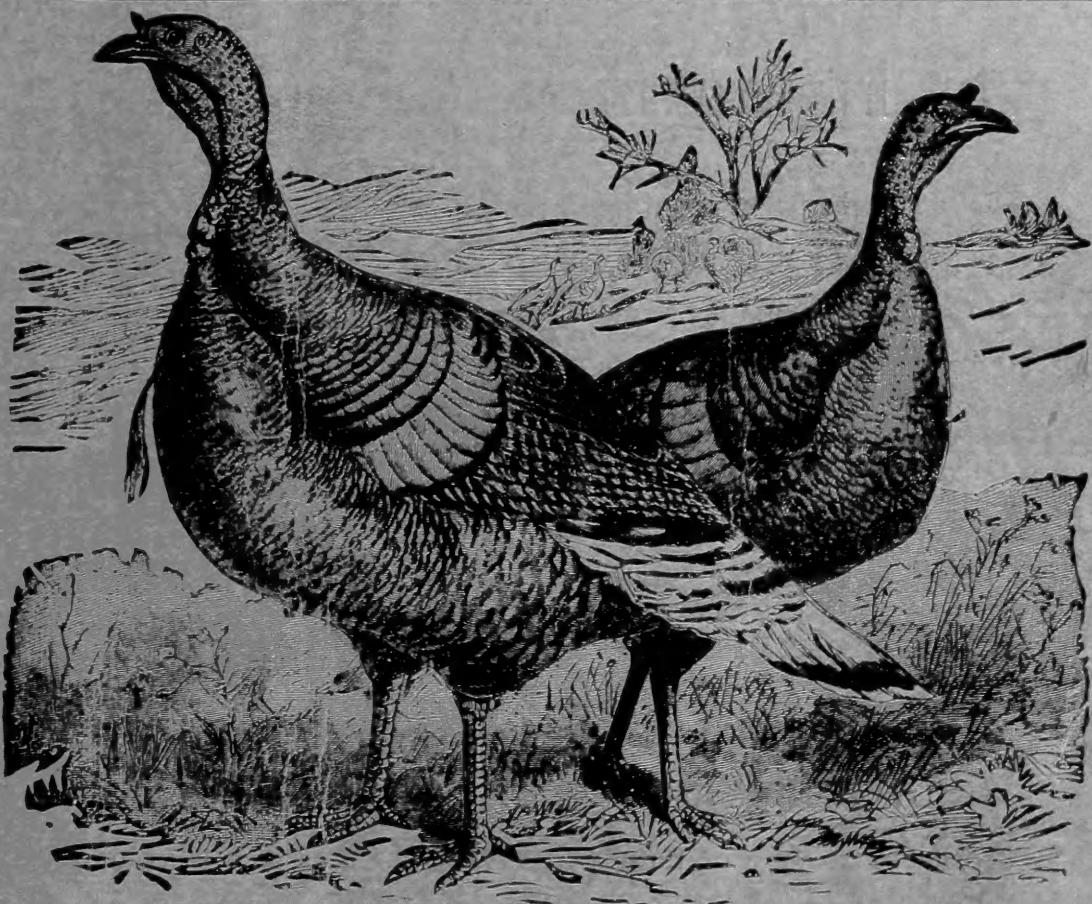


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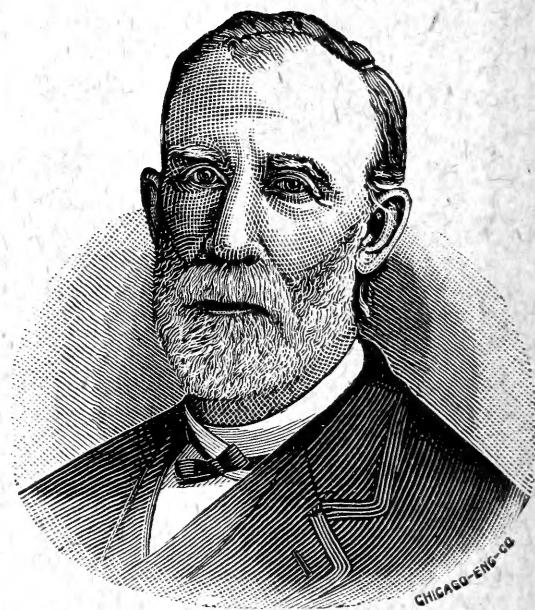
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# PRACTICAL TURKEY RAISING.

## TURKEYS FOR MARKET

—AND—

## TURKEYS FOR PROFIT.

BY

FANNY FIELD, *seud.*

THE MOST EXPERIENCED TURKEY RAISER IN AMERICA.

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN  
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COMPILED BY R. B. MITCHELL,

AUTHOR OF THE

SUMMIT LAWN POULTRY BOOKS.

PRICE.

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## *INTRODUCTORY.*

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*In offering a new book to the public it is customary for the author to make a few introductory remarks, and I am anxious to follow the time-honored custom; but for the life of me I don't know what to say—except that I write in answer to a demand for practical information concerning raising turkeys for market, and hope that my work will fill the "long-felt want."*

*FANNY FIELD.*

# TURKEYS FOR MARKET.

BY FANNY FIELD.

## CHAPTER I.

### Will it Pay?

Of course the croakers will tell you that turkey-raising won't pay, they tried it once and they think they know all about it. In the first place the old turkeys wouldn't lay anywhere within a half mile of the buildings, but would hide their nests away off in the woods and in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, and it took more time to hunt up the nests and run after the eggs than the eggs were worth. Then not more than half the eggs set would hatch, and not more than one-fourth of the young turks that did get into this "cold and unfeeling world" ever lived to grow up; and finally those that did graduate into Thanksgiving turkeys didn't bring enough to pay for the food it took to grow them. Oh, I know the whole story that the croakers have to tell; have heard it so often that I know it by heart; and besides, if I must tell the ungilded truth, that is about the way my turkey venture turned out the first season. But because of a few discouragements and dead turkeys, I didn't give up beat, and declare that turkey-raising wouldn't pay.

I started out to *raise* turkeys and to make them *pay*, and after I got the "hang" of the turkey's disposition and constitution, understood their mental, moral and physical needs, I did make them pay. And now, from my own experience, I can truthfully say that when the work is thoroughly done, and the business wisely managed, there is no branch of poultry farming that pays so well in proportion to the investment of time, labor and capital as raising turkeys for market.

### Not a Business For Everybody.

But right here let me say that turkey-raising is not a business for everybody. All farmers are not so situated that they can raise turkeys without interfering with the comfort and rights of

their neighbors. Chickens can be raised almost anywhere. The owner of a small village lot can manage to raise a few chickens without trespassing on his neighbors' rights, for chickens can be raised in limited quarters. But turkeys must have range—lots of it, and you have no right to allow them to range over your neighbors' gardens and fields; therefore consider the size of your farm and the "lay of your land" before you go into the business of turkey-raising.

### Turkey Raising for Women.

Farmers' wives and daughters who desire to do some extra work that will pay in money, and who live where the turkeys can have the necessary amount of range, might raise a flock of turkeys every year that would bring them in a clear profit of anywhere from fifty to two or three hundred dollars, according to the size of the flock, and it wouldn't seriously interfere with the other work which usually falls to the lot of women on the farm. I know whereof I speak, for one year I raised a flock of 150 turkeys besides doing all the house-work and sewing for a family of five. Those turkeys brought almost \$400, fully two-thirds of which was clear profit, and I never earned the same amount any easier.

### How Much Profit per Head.

That depends upon locality, price of food, and upon the quality of your market turkeys after they are grown. In New England, New York state, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, turkeys can be grown for about one-third of the price they will bring when marketed. It does not cost us over \$1 per head to grow and market turkeys that will weigh from twelve to fifteen pounds apiece at Thanksgiving time; and in nearly all eastern cities and large villages prime Thanksgiving turkeys will sell readily at prices ranging from twenty to twenty-five cents per pound, dressed weight. In the West prices are lower, but there grain is cheaper, so that the western farmers can make as much in proportion to the cost of raising as eastern turkey growers.

### No Danger of Overdoing The Business.

Don't be afraid that everybody will "rush into the business and overstock the market, so that turkeys won't sell at any price." I have seen a good many "times," but I have never yet seen a

time when first-class Thanksgiving turkeys would not sell at good-paying prices, and I never expect to see such a time—at least I don't expect it to get along here for a hundred years yet, and by that time you and I will be old enough to retire from the turkey business. Thanksgiving is an American institution, and the turkey is the Thanksgiving bird, and every true American will have a turkey for his Thanksgiving dinner if he has to live on cold potatoes and dried herrings for a month afterwards. And, besides, Thanksgiving is not the only time when market turkeys are in demand. From early fall until late spring the city markets call for turkeys, and as the supply of first-class turkeys has never yet been equal to the demand, I hardly think it will pay to lose any sleep through fear of not being able to sell our turkeys after we have grown them.

### Not Hard to Raise.

It is just as easy to raise turkeys as it is to raise chickens—after you know how. For the first few weeks of their lives turkeys require the very best of care, perhaps rather more than chickens of the same age, but after they are fully feathered and have thrown out the red on their heads, turkeys require less care, and are less liable to disease than chickens.

### Capital To Begin With.

It requires but very little cash capital to commence the business of raising turkeys for market. Houses and yards are not needed. Since turkeys must be raised on farms, and farmers generally raise grain, etc., the only cash outlay to begin with will be for breeding-stock. Later, after the young turkeys are hatched, you will need coops and runs, and if you raise a large number of turkeys, you will also need a turkey shed.

### Number To Begin With.

If you have had no experience in turkey-raising you should not start with a large flock expecting to raise several hundred the first year. It is better to begin in a small way and work up. From a breeding-stock of five hens and one gobbler you can raise—i. e. if you have what is termed "good luck"—from 75 to 100 turkeys, and that will be quite as many as the inexperienced turkey-raiser ought to attempt the first year.

## How To Keep up The Breeding-Stock.

Each year keep a certain number of the very best females to take the place of the five-year-old hens that must be killed; that will give you a breeding-stock of one, two, three and four-year-old hens. These future breeders should be selected early in the fall before you commence fattening for market, and should be marked so that they will not be sold or killed "by mistake." Generally speaking it is better to buy a gobbler of some reliable breeder than it is to keep one of your own raising, as turkeys show the evil effects of close in-breeding sooner than any other fowl stock. Some of the most prominent breeders of Bronze turkeys send west every two or three years and get a wild gobbler to use in their breeding-yards; consequently their turkeys are kept up to a high standard in plumage, size and hardiness. A gobbler from the yards of a breeder who has taken so much trouble to improve his stock will cost more than one from "most anybody," but it will be cheaper in the end.

It is often difficult to buy a two-year-old gobbler, so it is better to buy a yearling the year before you send the old one to pot, and shut him up away from the hens during the mating season the first year.

## Mark Your Turkeys.

Sometimes turkeys disappear mysteriously in a night, and no one except the thief knows whither they go, and he won't tell. We once lost a pair that way—a pair of fine young White Hollands about four months old. At night-fall we had them; in the morning they were not—at least they were not anywhere on our premises. Several weeks later we saw that pair in a flock of mongrel turkeys on a farm several miles from our place. We felt sure those were our turkeys, but we couldn't "prove property," and so had to stand the loss.

At another time our Bronze turkeys got mixed up with a flock of the same kind belonging to a neighbor, and such a time as we had "sorting them out" again. Our feelings were somewhat mixed too before the matter was finally settled; indeed it was never settled satisfactorily, for I always felt sure that the neighbor had one of my best hens, and he felt equally sure that he raised that hen, and that I had one of his young gobblers.

Now since such "accidents" will happen, I say: mark every turkey that you raise as soon as it is fully feathered, and every one that you buy as soon as it comes into your possession; then

you will be able to claim and hold your own wherever you find them. After our unfortunate experience with "mixed flocks," we marked all our turkeys, and our "trade-mark" came handy and saved trouble and hard feelings more than once. No, we didn't put rings on their legs or in their ears; we just took a punch and cut a small circular hole in the web of the left foot; the neighbor with whom we had the misunderstanding marked his turkeys on the right foot, and another turkey-raiser in the neighborhood marked his turkeys with a hole in each foot. These punches are made for the purpose of marking poultry, and cost thirty cents a pair. Keep a record of your method of marking: it may be handy to have in case of dispute.

### **Get Good Breeding-Stock.**

Several of your chances of success in raising turkeys depend upon the parent stock. The parent stock must be of good size, strong, perfectly healthy and mature. "Like begets like," and you cannot raise vigorous, healthy turkeys from stock that is weak, unhealthy or immature.

### **Age of Breeding-Stock.**

Yearling turkeys are not so desirable for breeding-stock as birds that are older; but when you can get no others, select some of the earliest and best of the previous season's hatch. The turkey hens may be kept four or five years for breeders, but we have not deemed it best to keep a gobbler after the fourth year.

### **Number of Hens to One Gobbler.**

One gobbler may be mated to any number of hens, from one to a dozen. One of my old neighbors who used to be noted as a successful turkey-raiser says that he has kept as many as sixteen hens to one gobbler, and the eggs hatched well.

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## CHAPTER II.

### The "Best Breed."

The *Standard* recognizes six different varieties of turkeys : the Bronze, White, Black, Buff, Slate and Narragansett. All of these originated from the wild turkey of North America.

The main color of the Bronze turkey gobbler is a rich, deep bronze that looks dark, almost black, in the shade, but when the fowl is in the clear sunlight the feathers on the back and breast glisten like polished gold. Each feather on the back terminates in a narrow black band. The wing feathers are evenly marked with bars of white or gray, and when the wings are closed the wing cornets show as a wide bronze band. The tail feathers are black, marked across with narrow bars of light brown, each feather ending with a wide black band edged with white or gray. The legs are large and strong, dark in young birds, but near a pink or flesh-color in old ones. The hen closely resembles the gobbler, except that the plumage is not so showy and brilliant.

Turkeys of the Bronze variety grow to an enormous size, well-grown males weighing from eighteen to twenty-two pounds alive at six months, and females of the same age from ten to fourteen pounds. They do not reach full maturity until the third year, when the gobblers weigh anywhere from thirty to forty pounds, sometimes more, and the hens from eighteen to twenty-five pounds.

### White Turkeys,

called by breeders the "White Holland," are, as the name indicates, clear white, and the rich scarlet of the head and the jet black beards of the males, contrasting so beautifully against the snow-white plumage, render birds of this variety objects of attraction wherever seen. The White turkeys do not often grow so large as the Bronze, but it is the fault of the breeders. With a little more pains and skill in breeding this beautiful variety, they would soon equal the Bronze in weight, as they now do in all other qualities that go to make up a first-class market turkey.

### The Narragansetts

are called "gray," but they are really of a veritable black, each feather ending in a wide, light-gray band. They are very popular in Southern New England, where they are quite extensively raised

for the city markets. When pure bred, the Narragansetts are not so large as the Bronze, but when crossed with the Bronze the cross-bred birds rival the pure Bronze in size, and are splendid market birds.

### Other Breeds.

The Buff, Black and Slate turkeys are smaller than the other varieties named, and the names sufficiently indicate the color. They are good market birds, what there is of them.

### Which is Really the Best Breed?

Well, the Bronze turkeys are at present the favorites with the majority of those who raise turkeys for market, and breeders of this variety will tell you that the Bronze is in every way superior to all other varieties of the turkey family, but the plain truth of the matter is that there is not much choice except in size. I have found that a fifteen-pound (dressed) White or Narragansett turkey would sell just as quick and bring just as much as a Bronze of the same weight.

Sometimes private customers will take a notion that a white turkey is better than a dark one, and if you have such customers it would be well to humor their notions, especially if they are willing to pay you for doing it. But it is not often that private customers care what colored feathers their Thanksgiving turkey wore in life. If he is young, big and fat, they are satisfied.

### Common Turkeys.

Finally, upon this subject of breed, let me say that the common turkeys, which the *Standard* does not recognize at all, are not a bad sort, and if you have or can get some good, healthy common turkey hens, mate them with a pure-bred gobbler of one of the larger varieties, and you need not fear the result.

Now, don't misunderstand me on this point of the "best breed." I do not say, or think, that common turkeys are "good enough." Nothing of the kind. What I mean is, that if you cannot afford to buy a thoroughbred flock to start with, do the next best thing,—which is to get the thoroughbred male and mate him with the best common turkey hens you can get.

But in "counting the cost" of the thoroughbred flock to start with, you should take into consideration the fact that if you

keep pure stock only, you will probably have a chance to dispose of some of the best of those that you raise for considerably more than the market price.

But when buying a gobbler to mate with common hens, do not make the mistake of getting the biggest one you can find; get one of medium size for the first year. A large gobbler, one that would be a fit mate for hens of his own breed, would be liable to break down the smaller common turkey hens.

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## CHAPTER III.

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### Care of Breeding-Stock.

Through the winter, breeding-stock should not be over-fed or under-fed; one extreme is as bad as the other. Feed enough to keep in good condition, without laying on very much fat. Feed corn and other grain, with an occasional meal of cooked food, just to whet their appetites.

After the first of February commence feeding ground beef scraps, or meat of some kind, three or four times a week, and the hens will commence laying about the time danger of freezing the eggs is over. When the winters are mild the meat diet may be commenced earlier in the season. You must use some common sense along with the meat, and adapt directions to suit your climate.

### Keep the Breeding-Stock Tame.

“But,” exclaims some croaker, “you can’t tame turkeys.” Yes, you can, if you only know how. I have had turkeys so tame that they would eat from my hand and allow me to stroke their glossy backs. There is no secret about the taming process; the only magic used was unvarying gentleness and kindness in all our dealings with them. If you never scream and shout at your turkeys; never stone and club them; never allow the children, dogs or hired man to chase, tease, worry and frighten them, they will grow up as tame as chickens. What is the use of having them tame? Don’t you see? Tame turkeys are more manageable than those that are “as wild as hawks;” and by using a little strategy you can induce them to make their nests somewhere

near the farm buildings. A good deal of your success in turkey-raising depends upon knowing where the turkeys lay, and upon having them lay in safe places.

### **About Nests.**

Of course the turkey wants to hide her nest; the desire is born with her, inherited from countless generations of wild ancestors; but all the same you can make your turkeys lay about where you want them to, if you go to work the right way. One turkey-raiser whom I know, keeps a close watch over his turkeys, and when he sees one peering about in all sorts of odd corners, evidently looking for a place for a nest, he drives her into a barn or some other building and keeps her shut up until after she has laid; then he lets her out, and she generally goes back and continues to lay there. That plan works well in his case, but it would not be practicable in all cases. I think a better way is to provide suitable nests out of doors, near the buildings. Don't make "nice" nests; turkeys have a dislike for nice nests, that appear to have been prepared for their accommodation. Take a few staves out of one side of an old barrel, turn it open side down in some fence-corner, throw a lot of dead leaves in the barrel and some brush over and around it, and you will have a capital nest for a turkey. In other fence-corners, in old brush-piles, in thick clumps of bushes, and in any places that are a little secluded, but still near the buildings, make other nests of bottomless boxes with one side knocked off, or of even a few old boards leaned against the fence or an old stump—anything, everything that comes handy, only taking care to have the "fixture" so that the nest will be on the ground and the whole thing look just as if it happened there. Nine times out of ten the turkey will, if reasonably tame, take to these nests without once suspecting that you had a hand in them.

### **About the Gobbler.**

Most turkey breeders claim that a single service of the cock turkey is sufficient to fertilize all the eggs that the hen turkey will lay during the season; but we always let the gobbler run with the hens until they commence sitting; then we took him away and shut him in a yard where he couldn't bother the sitting turkeys. You see we once lost a nest of eggs that were half

hatched, just because the gobbler went fooling around the hen while she was on the nest.

### Care of the Eggs.

The eggs should not be allowed to accumulate in the nests, especially in the fore part of the season, while there is danger of chilling. Remove them as fast as laid, but leave two or three nest-eggs, of some kind, otherwise the turkey may forsake the nest. Keep the eggs in the house, in some place where there will be no danger of chilling, but do not keep them where they will keep *warm*. A cool, dry cellar is probably the best place, as the temperature is even; but if you have no cellar, put them in the next best place; the main point is to keep them cool without chilling them. They should be turned carefully every other day until wanted for hatching.

### Setting the Eggs.

The first eggs laid should be set under hens. Those laid later may be given to the turkeys when they show a desire to sit. Whenever practicable, set the eggs on the ground, but it won't do early in the season; then the nests of the sitters must be under shelter. Prepare the nests just as you would for hens' eggs, by putting an inverted sod or shovelful of earth in the bottom of the nest-box and covering it with fine hay or cut straw or chaff. As a preventive against lice, sprinkle sulphur, snuff or tobacco among the nesting and into the hen's feathers. Do not crowd too many eggs into the nest; from seven to nine, according to the size of the hen, is enough. Early in the season we never allow a large hen more than seven eggs. After the turkey eggs have been under the hen a week it is a good plan to put in two or three hen's eggs. We have always followed the plan of raising a few chickens with each brood of turkeys; for when raised together turkeys and chickens are not apt to quarrel when grown up, and the chickens will generally teach the turkeys to "come home to roost." During the last three weeks of incubation the eggs should be lightly sprinkled with tepid water when the hen is off the nest. When the nest is on the ground out of doors, this sprinkling is, of course, unnecessary. After the weather gets warm and the turkey has laid a dozen or fifteen eggs, the eggs may be left in the nest as laid, and when the turkey gets ready

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she will sit, and she will hatch every egg, too. If she takes a notion to sit before she has a nest full of eggs, you should fill up the nest with some of the eggs that have been taken away, or with hen's eggs, for a turkey will cover twenty eggs or more.

### **Care of Sitting Turkeys.**

After the turkeys are duly fitted out with a nestful of eggs and have settled down to business, let them alone. Don't heed the nonsense that has been written about taking the turkey from the nest every day for food and water. Turkeys have good sense, and when they are hungry will come off for food and drink. All you have to do is to watch and see that they have plenty of corn and water when they do come off. Generally they will not leave the nest oftener than once in three days, though I have had turkeys that came off regularly every other day.

### **Hatching in an Incubator.**

Turkeys *can* be hatched in an incubator and raised wholly by artificial means, but the novice in turkey-raising should not attempt it. Learn the "old-fashioned way" first.

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## **CHAPTER IV.**

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### **Care While Hatching.**

While the young turkeys are pecking their way out of their shells into a "cold and unfeeling world," it will not be necessary for you to poke around under the hen every two or three hours to see "how many she has hatched." Let her alone. Don't interfere in any way.

### **Just After Hatching.**

Newly-hatched turkeys are very delicate, and the less handling and fussing you give them during the first twenty-four hours of their existence, the better your chances of raising them. Whenever practicable, leave them undisturbed in the nest until

the mother-hen exhibits a desire to leave for "fresh fields and pastures new;" then remove the whole family to the coop, which should be in readiness to receive them. In moving, handle the poult as little and as carefully as possible. When the mother is a turkey-hen and has her nest out-of-doors, you must "look a little out" and coop her in season to prevent her from wandering off with her brood. If you find her with a nestful of young turkeys in the morning, it would be well to coop her about dark the same day; for if left out through the night, she would probably leave her nest the next morning before you were ready to attend to her.

### The Coop

must be clean and dry and of fair size. Most coops are too small, and many young chicks and turkeys are tramped to death by the mother-hens just because they have not room enough to "turn around in." The coop should have a board floor covered with sand or with equally dry earth; sand is the best. Make the front of the coop so that it can be closed up at night and in stormy weather.

### Food.

When the turkeys are about twenty-four hours old, they will be strong on their feet and will begin to look about for food; this is the time for their first meal, which shouldn't be meal at all, but a mixture of stale wheat-bread moistened with milk, "Dutch cheese," and hard-boiled eggs crumbled fine. The "cheese" is made by warming thick sour milk until the whey separates from the curd, and then draining off the whey through a cloth. When the whey is all out, the curd will be just dry enough to crumble easily, and it is one of the best things that can be fed to turkey-poults. Remember that you must not scald the milk, for scalding makes the curd tough and stringy and unfit for food. The egg must be boiled some twenty minutes. Boil an egg five minutes, and the white will be tough; boil it twenty minutes or so, and the whole egg can be crumbled and easily mixed with the other food. Season the food *lightly* with salt and black pepper, and after the first day or two a little lettuce or onion-tops, chopped fine, may be mixed in. Keep the poult on this fare for about two weeks, and feed regularly five times a day. After the first two days give sweet milk to drink. The third week, commence feeding cooked cornmeal and other cooked food. Don't give a

full feed of meal at first, but increase the amount of new food each day until at four or five weeks they may be kept on any kind of cooked food that you would give young chickens. The best way to cook meal is to wet it up with milk or water, add a "pinch" of salt and soda, and bake until done. The inside of the loaf should be crumbled and fed without wetting; the outside, or crust, only moistened enough to be crumbly.

Never feed raw meal to young turkeys. Keep them on cooked food until they are some ten weeks old, and never feed sour or sloppy food. Have all the food fresh and sweet, and only just moist enough to hold together. Don't leave food around. Feed each time only so much as will be eaten up clean. Don't season the food too highly with pepper; use no more than you would for your own eating. Give a little bonemeal—say a tablespoonful to a pint of feed—about three times a week. After the first two weeks give all the sour milk they will drink, if you can get it. It is "meat and drink" both, and when they have the milk no other meat food will be needed except what they get in the shape of insects. But if you are obliged to give only water for drink, feed a little cooked meat or egg once a day until the poult are eight or ten weeks old.

Some people to whom I have given this advice about feeding young turkeys declare that such food is too expensive, too much bother to prepare, and they feel quite sure that turkeys raised on such food would cost more than they would be worth after they were raised. I know that my advice reads as if it would be a good deal of work to prepare the food, but really it takes but a little time; and as for the expense, you must bear in mind that for the first four weeks the poult eat but little at a time, so that a little of the egg and wheat-bread goes a good ways. One egg is enough to mix with food sufficient to last a dozen young turkeys all day; and in most families crusts and crumbs enough to feed several broods of turkeys are thrown into the swill barrel every day. Of course turkeys can be raised without the boiled eggs, "Dutch cheese," and milk to drink, but I recommend such food because it is best, because it is "at hand," plenty on almost any farm. When such food cannot be had, feed the bread-crumbs for a day or two, and then feed bread made after the following recipe: One quart of cornmeal, one pint of shorts, two teaspoonfuls of baking-powder, teaspoonful of salt, a little pepper and a teacupful of finely-minced fresh meat of any kind. Add water enough to make a stiff dough, and bake thoroughly. After the poult begin to forage for insects

the meat may be left out. A loaf of this bread will keep good for three days, at least.

### Imperial Egg Food for Young Turkeys.

I don't believe in dosing turkeys, or chicks, or anything with medicines to "keep them well;" proper food and care will keep poultry well, if anything will. But the "Imperial Egg Food" is not a medicine, and I know, from experience, that it "agrees" with young turkeys wonderfully well. Turkeys make a rapid growth of feathers while young, and, if they are not fully supplied with the necessary material, they are liable to droop and die without any apparent cause. The Imperial Egg Food seems to supply a "long-felt want" in the way of something to promote early feathering of turkey-poults, and it sustains their strength during the critical period of "shooting the red" on their heads. A teaspoonful every other day is sufficient for a brood of twelve or fifteen young turkeys. Some turkey-raisers to whom I recommended this food objected on the score of expense; but let me remind all that it costs no more than the cayenne which is feed so liberally. When the Egg Food is used the pepper may be omitted from the food.

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## CHAPTER V.

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### Care of Turkeys Until Fully Feathered.

Young turkeys must be kept dry, clean and comfortable until after they are fully feathered and have thrown out the red on their heads. Exposure to cold and wet, tramping about in the rain, or in the grass when it is wet with rain or dew, and confinement in damp, filthy coops, will kill off your little turks at an alarming and discouraging rate. To keep the poult within bounds when the grass is wet, make a small run of wire netting, or else make a pen by placing wide boards on edge and fastening them in position by stakes driven into the ground. The boards should be about eighteen inches wide, and for a dozen or fifteen young turkeys the pen should enclose some fifteen square feet.

For the first three days after the poult leave the shell, or until all appear strong and lively, keep them confined to the limits of the coop and pen; then, on pleasant days, after the sun has dried the grass, give the hen and her brood liberty until nightfall. A hen mother will bring her family back to the coop at night, but for the first few nights you will have to drive or coax the turkey mother home, else she will sit down just where she happens to be, and she will get up in the morning and wander about in the wet grass without the slightest regard for the comfort and health of her children. After she has been driven home a few times, she will probably come of her own free will, especially if you keep your turkeys tame and always give them a supper after they get to the coop.

### Shed For Turkeys.

For the first two or three years after we commenced raising turkeys we had a good deal of trouble in getting our early hatched young turkeys safely through long spells of damp, rainy weather. Sometimes we didn't get them all through. We had tight, roomy coops, and in wet weather kept the little turkeys shut in, and they would get along all right for two or three days, but when the "spell of weather" lasted for four or five days, or a week, they would droop and die off at a rate which made turkey-raising seem a vain mockery.

One year a spell of rainy weather came along about the middle of May, when we had about seventy young turkeys nearly three weeks old. It lasted a whole week, and in spite of all our trouble nearly half our little flock died. Probably we should have lost many more if we had not on the morning of the fifth day moved the survivors into the barn, and given them the freedom of the dry floor. I have since learned that other turkey-raisers are troubled the same way. When the weather is favorable the little turkeys thrive and grow, but when the long spells of rainy weather come they die off at a rapid and discouraging rate.

Only a few days ago an Ohio farmer's wife wrote me concerning this very subject. She says: "I have been very much interested in your turkey articles, and by faithfully following your directions in regard to care of breeding stock, care of eggs, making nests, etc., succeeded in hatching more turkeys this year than ever before. I think I should have raised nearly all had the weather been favorable; but when the earliest broods

were about two weeks old, along came a whole week of damp weather, and before the sun shone again nearly two-thirds of my turkeys were gone. I kept them confined to the coops and runs, but everything was so damp that the tender little things just chilled, drooped and died. Now, what can I do to prevent my next turkey crop from going the same way should such a spell of weather come on while they are small? If I can manage that part of the business—get the young ones through such spells of weather—I believe I can make a success of the turkey business."

When a farmer has but two or three broods of young turkeys, he can move them into dry coops in the barn, woodshed, or anywhere where they can be kept dry until pleasant weather comes again; but the turkey-raiser who proposes to raise two or three hundred turkeys will find one or more "turkey sheds" handy to have.

We had them on our farm, and they paid expenses many times over. They were built twenty feet long, eight feet wide, seven feet high in front, four in rear; rough-boarded up and down, cracks battened, and had good shingle roofs; window in each end, and another window in the rolling door in front; floor of nearly a foot of dry gravel and sand. The mother hens were confined in coops placed along the back part of the shed, and the little turkeys had the freedom of the floor. On pleasant days, after the dew was off, the door was rolled back and hens and turks given liberty until night; but rainy days the doors were kept closed, and it was perfectly dry inside. The coops were moved often, the sand raked over, fresh sand thrown on, and the coops put back in place.

In a shed like this we kept eight hens and their broods of ten or twelve turkeys apiece. After the turkeys were out of the way we used the sheds (except the one which the turkeys that were kept over occupied) through the winter as needed for other purposes.

## CHAPTER VI.

### After They are Fully Feathered

and have thrown out the red on their heads, turkeys are very hardy and may be allowed free range in all sorts of weather; but they should always be at home at bed-time. If allowed to get in the habit of roosting away from the buildings, they will

sometimes, especially when insects are numerous, stay away in the fields for weeks at a time, and many of them will be appropriated by some two-footed or four-footed night prowler. You can't spend time to drive the turkeys home every night? Well, you won't have to. If they have been in the habit of coming home before they were weaned, they won't forget it afterwards unless you forget to find them. Turkeys that are accustomed to being fed at a certain place every evening will be there each evening as regularly as the cows come home. They may not be hungry, but they will come home from sheer force of habit, and if there is a roosting-place near the feeding-place they will go to bed there.

### More About Food.

After they are old enough to be allowed free range, the amount of food given and the number of meals per day should be determined by the amount they can gather for themselves of insects, and plenty of light feed in the morning and another at night will be sufficient; and the evening feed need be only a few handfuls; just enough to keep them in the habit of coming home. But one thing sure: if you want to have large turkeys at Thanksgiving time they must have enough to eat right along every day, and if they cannot find it for themselves you must provide it for them. Turkeys that are left to get along anyhow on just food enough to keep death off from the time they are weaned until a few months before market time, cannot then by a few days of extra feeding be transformed into first-class market birds. Turkeys must be kept growing from the start, and if they do not come home at night with full crops, fill them full of corn, wheat or buckwheat. No danger of feeding a growing turkey that has full liberty too much; you can't do it.

From the middle of September to the first of October begin issuing extra rations to your turkey flock. I don't mean that you are to begin to stuff them all they can eat four or five times a day, as will be necessary later, but give them a good breakfast of boiled potatoes, turnips, carrots, sweet apples, mixed with bran and cornmeal, "half-and-half," and at night give all they will eat up clean of corn and buckwheat. Twice a week add pulverized charcoal to the soft food, in the proportion of a heaping tablespoonful to every pint of feed; and after the supply of insect food fails give ground meat scraps daily in the same proportion.

Now by soft food I don't mean a soft, wet, sloppy mess, but that mixed so that it will be dry and crumbly. Keep pure water

handy, and of course a supply of gravel should always be where the fowls can help themselves. After the first killing frost, or real freeze, your turkeys cannot pick up food enough for themselves to amount to anything, and you should at once increase the daily allowance of food; I do not mean that you are to feed more at a time, but that you should issue an extra ration at noon. This noon meal need not be a full feed, but just a lunch to "stay" their stomachs and keep them from roaming about so much.

### For the Thanksgiving Market.

Some two weeks before Thanksgiving time separate from the rest of the flock all that you intend for the Thanksgiving market. This separation is necessary, because it is not desirable to fatten those that are to be kept over for breeding-stock, or the late-hatched ones that are not yet large enough for market. Feeding the whole flock extra rations of fattening food is not only a waste of food but works injury to all that are not to be killed soon.

But do not confine the Thanksgiving flock to small pens; turkeys that are shut up in small pens or coops seldom fatten as rapidly as those that have full liberty, in fact turkeys that are closely confined are more liable to lose flesh than to gain, no matter how much food may be placed before them; at least that has been our experience. Twice we tried to fatten turkeys by keeping them in close confinement and allowing a liberal quantity of food; but although all food was perfectly fresh and wholesome, and the utmost cleanliness observed about the coop and feeding trays, those turkeys wouldn't eat half rations, and at the end of three weeks' confinement they weighed less than when shut up, while those that had full liberty devoured the food and took on fat at a rapid rate. After those experiments, when the time came round to fatten turkeys, we confined the other flock to a roomy yard and allowed full liberty to those we desired to fatten right off. And our fattening turkeys did not "wander all over creation and run off their fat," as some of our advisers predicted they would; on the contrary, after we put them on full feed, they did not go many rods from their feeding and roosting places.

Give the fattening turkeys all they can eat four times a day from the time when you commence full feeding until twenty-four hours before slaughtering time. The first three of the daily meals should be of cooked potatoes and corn meal, or of corn meal scalded with milk or water, and the last of whole corn with

an occasional feed of buckwheat for a change. Give the first meal as soon as possible after daylight, and the last just before dark. Feed each time all they will eat up clean, but do not leave food by them. Feed the charcoal once a day, and keep water or milk and a supply of gravel, where they can help themselves. Two weeks of such feeding will put turkeys that have been growing and in good condition all along in the best possible condition for market.

### Killing and Dressing.

After the turkeys are well-fattened they must be well-dressed in order to command the highest market price. No matter how big and fat a box of turkeys may be, if they are bruised and torn in dressing, or are not dressed in the style the market demands, they will not sell at top prices. Different markets have some different notions about dressing turkeys, and the only way for you to make sure of suiting your market is to write to the commission house to which you propose to ship your turkeys and get their directions for dressing and packing turkeys for their market; therefore it is not necessary for me to give more than a few general directions, or rather hints, about killing and dressing.

Keep your turkeys without food for from twelve to sixteen hours before killing, especially if they are for the New York or any other market that prefers undrawn poultry. The reason for this is that a mass of undigested food soon becomes putrid and taints the whole carcass. Four years ago the city of New York passed an ordinance to the effect that no chickens or turkeys should be offered for sale in the city unless the crops were empty and shrunken close to their bodies. Any person offering turkeys with full crops would be liable to a fine of five dollars for each turkey, and the turkeys would be confiscated. For New England markets, and for nearly all markets outside of New York city, poultry must be drawn. In Boston it is against the law to offer undrawn poultry for sale, except spring chickens and spring ducks.

If your market wants the heads left on the turkeys you must kill the birds by bleeding them through the mouth. Suspend the fowls by the feet, and with a narrow-bladed, very sharp knife, make a clean cut across the back of the roof of the mouth, just under the eye. But if your turkeys are to go to a market which objects to paying for useless weight, you can kill your turkeys by cutting the heads off. When you kill by

beheading, after the fowl is dressed turn down the skin of the neck, cut off a piece of the bone, draw the skin back in place so as to cover the end of the bone, tie and trim so as to present a neat appearance.

Don't scald your turkeys; prime dry-picked turkeys usually bring a higher price than the best scalded. The feathers will come off easily enough without scalding if you pick at once before they set. But if you do scald them don't scald the head, if that is to be left on; the hot water injures the appearance of the comb and eyes—makes them look as if the fowl were sick when killed. Remove all pin-feathers carefully, and take care not to break, tear or bruise the skin; such places soon turn dark and injure the looks of the fowl. Singe the fowl without smoking it. If the shanks and feet are dirty, wash them clean and wipe off any bloody spots that may be anywhere on the fowl. After they are dressed put them aside to cool, and they must be entirely cold, but not frozen, before they are packed for shipment. If packed before quite cold they will be almost sure to spoil.

Unless your turkeys are a pretty even lot it is better to pack the largest and best in one box, the medium size in another, and the small ones in a third. They will bring better prices than if all sent in one package. Remember that a few good birds mixed in with a lot of inferior ones will not sell the lot at top prices; but a few poor birds in with a lot of good ones will be liable to spoil the sale of the lot.

If the weather is warm and "muggy" when it comes time to dress your turkeys for Thanksgiving market, and there are no indications of an immediate change, do not dress the turkeys unless they are to be sold near home. If to be sent to a distant market in unfavorable weather it is better to send them alive; then they cannot spoil on the way.

### Save the Feathers.

When dressing turkeys save the feathers. The body-feathers are worth but little, but the tail and some of the wing-feathers are used for making feather-dusters, and bring from 20 to 25 cents a pound. And the large quills from the first joint of the wing, which have heretofore been considered worthless, are now manufactured into a kind of bone called "Featherbone," which is taking the place of whalebone in the manufacture of whips, corsets, etc.

## CHAPTER VII.

## Late Hatched Turkeys.

When we commenced raising turkeys I supposed that turkey hens did up all their laying for the whole year in the spring, for up to that time I had never heard of a turkey that laid two litters of eggs in the same season; so when the turkeys had laid from 25 to 35 eggs apiece, and those that were not sitting had been "broken up," I supposed that was the last of turkey eggs until the next season. That was in the latter part of May. Along in the latter part of June, when the other turkeys were strutting about with families at their heels, we suspected from appearances that the two turkeys which had been broken up because we had not turkey eggs enough to go around, were laying somewhere, and a diligent search by the entire detective force of the farm revealed two nests (one containing 10 the other 12 eggs), in the brush at the far side of the orchard. "Well," said old Mrs. Sanderson, the only one in the neighborhood who pretended to know anything about the ways of turkeys, "you better break them up, take the eggs away before they begin to sit, for turkeys hatched in August won't grow to amount to anything." We took the eggs, but my conscience troubled me a little when I saw the robbed turkeys looking around their nests. We visited the nests every day for a week, but found no more turkey eggs there or anywhere else. "I guess those turkeys have given up the notion of raising families this year," I remarked as I fed the flock the evening after the seventh unsuccessful trip to the orchard lot. "Those turkeys" never said a word, but picked up their corn and oats with an air of resignation that would have deceived a more suspicious mortal than myself. I thought no more about the matter until the first week in September, when one of those turkeys appeared near the barn with a family of thirteen little "moslems." A few days later the other came also among us with a family of eleven and an expression which said plainly, "don't you wish you had let us alone last June?"

I consulted old Mrs. Sanderson again. "I'd kill 'em right off now and have done with it; they'll never amount to anything—won't get feathers afore cold weather comes, and if they do, more as likely as not they'll all die afore spring." The "head of the family" advised me to follow Mrs. Sanderson's advice, but I couldn't make up my mind to have the little turks killed, so they

lived and grew, and grew. I never saw turkeys grow as those did. We fed and cared for them just as we did for the earlier ones, and by the time they were ten weeks old they were every bit as large and well-feathered as the earlier ones were at the same age. Having such a good start before cold weather they didn't stop growing when cold weather set in, but kept right on regardless of the weather—i. e. they all kept on except three which died. The last week in February dressed turkeys sold at 20 cents a pound, and we at once dressed our late hatched birds and sent them to market. They averaged  $12\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. apiece, dressed weight. "Well, I never," exclaimed old Mrs. Sanderson.

Now the moral to this is: Turkeys hatched early enough in the fall to get well feathered up before cold, wet weather comes on, will, with plenty of food and care, grow right along and make good market birds for late winter and early spring. So don't worry for fear that your late-hatched turkeys will not "make a live" of it, but take care of them, and they will live and pay well for their living. But bear in mind that these late-hatched turkeys should not be kept for breeders.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

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### Diseases of Turkeys.

Turkeys are liable to attacks of chicken cholera, and the symptoms are the same as in chickens. I consider it a waste of time and money to doctor cholera-sick turkeys. As soon as you notice the cholera symptoms kill the sick ones, and burn or bury the carcasses; then thoroughly cleanse and disinfect the premises. Of course I don't mean your whole farm, but the places where your turkeys roost, where they are in the habit of loafing around, where the sick ones have left their droppings, and their feed-troughs and drinking-vessels. Spade up the ground and scatter lime freely, and scrub out the feed-troughs and drinking-vessels with a disinfecting fluid made by dissolving three pounds of copperas in five gallons of water and adding half a pint of crude carbolic acid. If your turkeys roost in a shed or house of any kind, whitewash it thoroughly, and then sprinkle this solution about freely every day until after the last trace of the disease has disappeared from the premises.

To counteract the effect of the cholera germs which the apparently well turkeys may have in their systems, add a few drops of carbolic acid to the drinking-water once a day, and give powdered charcoal in the food. Turkeys are queer critters, and will sometimes refuse to drink the water that has been "doctored" with the acid, and in that case mix the acid with their soft food. After a week has passed without any new cases, the use of the acid may be discontinued.

But if you want to try your hand at doctoring, separate the sick from the well, clean up as directed, and then treat the sick as follows: "When it is discovered that a bird refuses to eat and the discharges are copious and yellow, give a full-grown bird one-half of a blue pill the first day, and one a day for the next two or three days. I take a pinch of saffron and scald it in a little milk, and when it is cool give some of this with one-fourth of a teaspoonful of hypophosphite of soda and one asafoetida pill. For a small bird one-fourth of a blue pill is enough. Use the Douglas mixture in the drinking-water and keep them from the rest of the flock, where they will be sheltered from the storm. When they are recovering they have a great appetite, but do not get over having these discharges for a week or so." This course of treatment is recommended by a Connecticut turkey-raiser who claims to have cured several by it. Turkeys are also liable to attacks of

### Roup,

and when the roup gets a good hold of a turkey it is a hard disease to cure, but if taken in hand as soon as it makes its presence known, it can usually be cured. The first symptoms are about the same as those of a "cold in the head" in the human subject, and the hoarseness, sneezing, watery eyes, and rattling in the throat (and during spells of damp weather, or if roup is in your neighborhood, you should look out for these symptoms), give each patient a dessertspoonful of castor-oil at night and afterwards give the "German Roup Pills" according to directions, also give pulverized charcoal and Douglas mixture—a tablespoonful of each to a pint of food once a day until the turkeys are well again. This course of treatment will usually cure in a week, but if it does not, and the patients grow steadily worse, the best course is to kill them, for it is a waste of time and medicine to doctor a rousy turkey after the nostrils are clogged with offensive matter, the throat full, and the head

swollen to twice its natural size, as is usually the case in advanced stages of the disease. Sometimes a long swelling will come under one or both eyes when the patient seems better in other respects; and when this is the case the swelled place should be cut open, the matter pressed out, and the wound washed daily with carbolic soap-suds, or with castile soap suds, to which a few drops of carbolic acid have been added. After the wound has been cleaned apply a little of a mixture of sweet-oil and carbolic acid; two drops of the acid to a teaspoonful of the oil is sufficient. The oil is healing and the acid disinfects and also keeps flies away. The turkey may recover if the swelling be unopened, but the eye under which the swelling happens to be will be a total wreck, and if both eyes are affected that way the turkey had better be dead.

### Lice.

If you take proper precautions when you set the hens, and put the broods in clean coops, it is not likely that your little turks will be bothered with lice, but still you should always keep a look-out for their appearance. If young turkeys that seem all right when first hatched, begin to droop in a day or so, refuse to eat and act as if they were troubled with headache, at once examine the heads for lice. You will probably find them —three or four large ones half buried in the flesh. Remove the torments at once, and then rub the head with a mixture of sweet-oil and carbolic acid—one drop of the acid in a teaspoonful of oil. For the common chicken lice, which troubles turkeys as well as chickens, dust carbolic powder, or insect powder, well into the feathers of the mother hen and her brood. Do this just at night. Also mix some of the carbolic powder in the sand on the floor of the coop. *Never use coal-oil, sulphur, or any mixture that contains either*, for lice on young turkeys. Such remedies (?) generally kill the lice and turkeys together; and when they do not kill the poult outright they often injure them very much. Sore eyes and blindness among young turkeys is often caused by the use of sulphur for lice.

### To Restore Chilled Turkeys.

Should any of your young turkeys get thoroughly wet and chilled by being caught out in a sudden shower, don't fool away any time waiting to see whether they will "get over it" or not, but take them at once to the house and keep them there until

warm, dry and lively. If any are so chilled that they seem almost lifeless, dip them into quite warm water clear up to their eyes, and hold them there until they protest by kicking; then take them out, wipe with a soft cloth, and put in a warm place until they are quite dry. By this method we have restored turkeys that were apparently lifeless when brought to the house.

### **Leg Weakness**

is sometimes caused by lack of bone-forming material in their food, and sometimes it is caused by inherited constitutional weakness. In the latter case there is no cure, but in the former give bonemeal in the food and Douglas mixture in the drink. Young turkeys that come from healthy stock, and have proper food, "seasoned" with Imperial Egg Food, are never troubled with leg weakness.

### **Constipation.**

Young turkeys are sometimes troubled with constipation, caused by too much concentrated food, lack of coarse sand or gravel to aid in digesting the food, and lack of green food. Give a half teaspoonful dose of castor oil, change diet, and furnish gravel and green food. Also give pulverized charcoal in the food two or three times a week.

### **Diarrhea**

is caused by exposure to cold and wet, lack of gravel, and sour, uncooked food. Give a half teaspoonful dose of tincture of rhubarb at night, and the next morning a small pill, made of equal parts of cayenne, powdered chalk and rhubarb, wet up with camphor enough to mold into shape. Give these pills once or twice a day, according to the frequency of the discharges, until the patients are better. Feed cooked rice, stale bread, and give scalded milk to drink. Also give the charcoal in the food. Some of those thus treated will probably get well—i. e. if you take them in hand in time; but the majority will probably die, for after a young turkey's digestive organs get out of order he has a slim chance for his life.

### **Prevention Better Than Cure.**

It is better and easier, as you will probably discover in time, to prevent disease among turkeys, than it is to cure them after they

are down sick. And to prevent disease, breed only from healthy stock, keep your premises clean, and feed and care for your turkeys as I have directed in the preceding pages.

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## CHAPTER IX.

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### Turkeys as Incubators and Foster-mothers.

I am frequently asked, whether it be true or not, if turkeys can be taught to sit and hatch at any time of the year ; and also if a turkey that has not been sitting and hatching can be made to own and care for a troop of chickens or turkeys.

Upon this subject Geyelin says: "At any time of the year, turkeys, whether broody or not, are taught to hatch in the following manner: Some addled eggs are emptied, then filled with plaster of Paris and placed in a nest, after which a turkey is brought from the yard and placed on the nest, which is then covered over with lattice. For the first forty-eight hours she will endeavor to escape, but soon becomes reconciled, when fresh eggs are substituted for the plaster ones. The turkeys will continue to hatch, without intermission, from three to six months, or even longer. The turkeys are taken from the nests once a day to feed and water ; but after a while they cease self-feeding, when it is necessary to cram them. When a turkey has been hatching for some months and shows a disposition to leave off, a glassful of wine is given her in the evening, and a number of chicks substituted for the eggs ; on waking up in the morning she takes kindly to them and leads them about, strutting amidst a troop of seventy to a hundred chickens with all the dignity of a drum-major. When a troop-leader is required that has not been hatching, such as a capon or turkey, then it is usual to pluck some feathers from their breasts, give them a glass of wine, and whilst they are in a state of inebriation, place the chickens under them. When they get sober the next morning they feel that some sudden change has come over them, and as the denuded part is kept warm by the chickens, they take kindly to them."

never treated any of our turkeys that way, and cannot say whether it works satisfactorily or not ; am inclined to think not.

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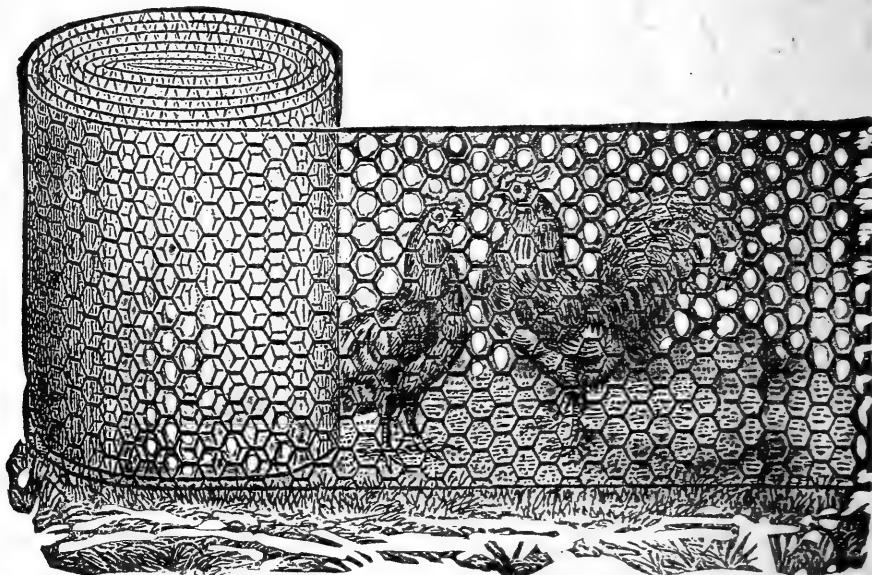
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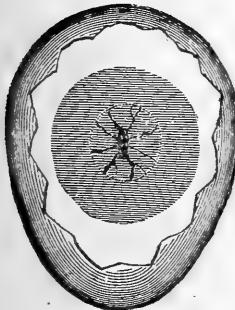
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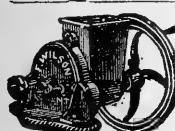
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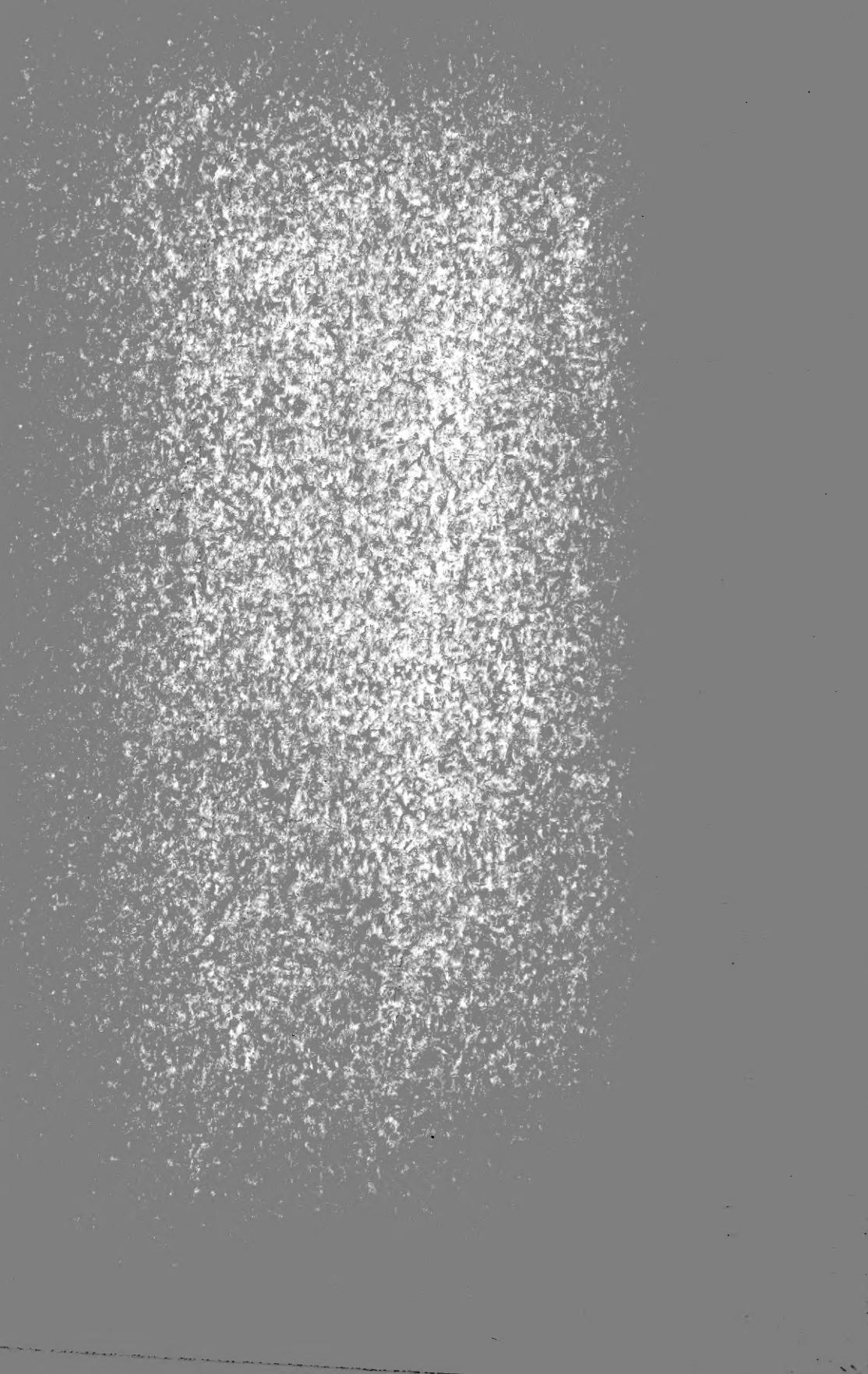
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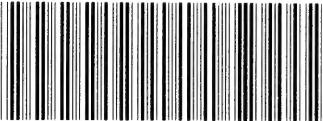
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